



Jackson Hole Fire/EMS Operations Manual

Approved by: Will Smith
Will Smith, MD, Medical Director

Approved by: Willy Watsabaugh
Willy Watsabaugh, Chief

Title: **Patient Refusing
Treatment/Transport**

Division: 17

Article: 5.2

Revised: April 2012

Pages: 2

PURPOSE

Every contact made between an EMT and person that carries a request for assistance, or even an implied request, brings into play an agreement on the part of the Fire/EMS system to provide a response, and if warranted, assistance. Generally, this "provider/patient" relationship is clear-cut and well defined because a person in need of the assistance has specifically requested it. However, there are times when, even after requesting assistance, or having a request for aid made by a family member, bystander, or law enforcement, the patient decides that further assessment and/or treatment is not desirable or necessary. At this time, especially if some sort of examination or treatment has taken place, it is important to document in writing this refusal of further treatment by the patient. Have the patient sign a release form that relieves Jackson Hole Fire/EMS of all responsibility/liability in the event of further duress by the patient. If the patient refuses to sign the release form, document this fact on the Patient Care Report (PCR), using all available persons involved with the run. Provide as many details as possible in regard to the incident in the PCR and complete the PCR REFUSAL CHECKLIST.

SECTION I – COMPETENT PATIENTS REFUSING TREATMENT AGAINST MEDICAL ADVICE

The policy for patients who refuse emergency medical care judged to be necessary by the EMS provider, who have been deemed competent to refuse care, and for which concurrence has been received by Medical Control shall be to:

1. Contact the Medical Control, **and**;
2. Have the patient sign the **Refusal of Care** form. Complete PCR. If the patient refuses to sign, this should be documented on the Patient Care Report as well.

SECTION II – INCOMPETENT PATIENTS REFUSING TREATMENT AGAINST MEDICAL ADVICE

The policy for patients evaluated as being incompetent (e.g. intoxicated) to make a rational decision regarding medical treatment will not be allowed to sign the Refusal of Care form and will be transported to the hospital for evaluation, by law enforcement personnel if necessary.

The following criteria will help to identify a patient who is not competent to refuse medical treatment:

1. The patient presents a danger to self or others, or;
2. The patient is gravely disabled (i.e. has an altered mental status or level of consciousness,

or severely altered vital signs such as low blood pressure), or is making clearly irrational decisions such as refusing treatment for a serious injury.

3. The patient has a strong odor of alcoholic beverage or appears to be under the influence of drugs **and** shows no signs of underlying medical event such as diabetic emergency.